

FEARLESS FLYER

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 8 NOVEMBER 2010

AT SEA, ON TASK

In the last four weeks MCM CREW FEARLESS has endured all the tasking, VIP visits, repairs and special evolutions that any crew could conceive. With two weeks of underway time to begin the month, the pace was set early. In conjunction with fellow MCM crews both US and from the UK, tasking commenced and never ended for the duration of the underway. Although major casualties to equipment hindered the capability of USS ARDENT, CREW FEARLESS continued to set the pace and contributed to the team effort no matter what obstacle lay ahead. It can be said that CREW FEARLESS tried everything and anything to accomplish the mission, and it was recognized.

After nearly forty days in port during an extended maintenance availability, the



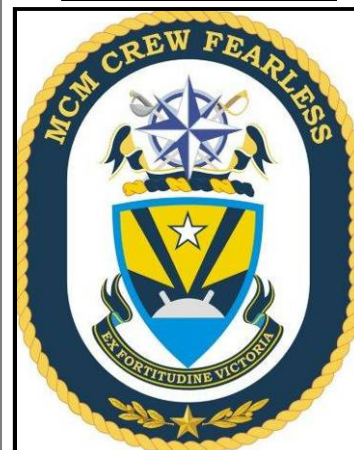
engineering department was able to get USS ARDENT away from the pier and safely out to sea. Repairs continued until the last line was free of the pier. At sea, the Engineers were able to practice casualty control as leaks and power loss were safely controlled and corrected. This underway time was crucial for the department as the normal watch standing is vital to

gaining qualifications and has been rare during this deployment. The training team was able to execute multiple drill days and the proficiency within the drill sections are improving.. Once back in port the Engineers were able to enjoy a relatively calm pace having brought the plant to a higher level of readiness during the previous two months. With maintenance and repairs at a steady state, the near future will be the opportunity to train and prepare future watchstanders for ULTRA-S who are willing to shoulder the responsibility.

The greatest responsibility of the month was headed up with precision and execution by the supply department; the Thanksgiving meal was spectacular! The crew ate their fill with all the traditional food and desserts. With an army of Food Service Assistants, CS3 Hope, CS2(SW) Melendrez and CS1(SW/AW) Toews prepared and served a great meal to kick off the holiday weekend. Prior to the turkey day meal, Supply prepared a tremendous meal for Admiral Harvey, who addressed all MCM and PC Commanding Officers. Admiral Harvey congratulated

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- NOTES FROM THE CO
- FEARLESS FRG
- OMBUDS CORNER



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"FROM COURAGE, VICTORY"

the galley on a fine meal and gave the logistics side great news stating the budget will increase to support our mission.

Operations department led the headlines during this last month. The technicians in combat battled daily casualties to the MNV and Sonar. Likewise, radio was thrown a curveball by Mother Nature in the form of a lightning strike which left our communications equipment seemingly out of alignment for the duration of the underway. Deck was put in the spotlight when an underwater obstruction caught a streamed Sweep Wire and tore it apart. To see first hand the difficulties, Crew Fearless was visited by Admiral Klein, Commander Expeditionary Strike Group Five, who toured the ship and visited with the crew to gain insight as to the daily challenges of the mine warfare community afloat. Also out of the comfort zone, USS ARDENT performed multiple rafting details with a UK amphibious ship and a towing exercise with a US Support Vessel. From start to finish all of operations had to adapt to a constantly changing problem and for each problem identified and overcome, another arose.

The month of November started and ended in port with major casualties to repair, but the total gained was better than lost. USS ARDENT is steadily rising in readiness and it is due entirely to the hard work and effort of the crew and the fantastic technicians ashore from NSA Bahrain. Each day presents new challenges and tasks but each day progress is made. With the holidays already here, CREW FEARLESS thanks all the friends and family who send their love by package, letter, email or phone call. Please know that all of your efforts to support us are appreciated and we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.



"EX FORTITUDINE VICTORIA"

NOTES FROM THE CO

Goodbye November and month # 3 of Deployment! Next month when I write my notes for the December newsletter we will be over the hump and on the downward slope...but not quite yet. November was an incredibly full month packed with visits from Flag Officers, promotions, awards, and major at sea exercises to name only a few. First off I wanted to say farewell to CS1 Caballero and MNC Baker. When we wished them good luck last month as they departed for San Diego I wasn't sure if we would get them back. We received the official word earlier in the month and, unfortunately, they will not be returning to CREW FEARLESS. MNC Baker was only with us for a short time and I'm sure that he will do great things again on Sea Duty once he has recovered. Good luck MNC!



To CS1 Caballero I will dedicate a little more space since he was unable to say Farewell to the Crew in the traditional way that most FEARLESS sailors normally say goodbye after a long period with us. CS1 joined FEARLESS shortly after I checked onboard and shortly before our 2009 deployment. During his time he successfully directed the efforts of the best Galley in the MCM Fleet as inspected by ATG Ingleside and ATG San Diego during consecutive year Supply Management Certification inspections in 2009 and 2010. His smiling face, positive personality, and superior meals will be missed onboard. Fair Winds and Following Seas to the Caballero family! I've talked it over with Tanya, and though CS1 will no longer be a part of the crew, she will remain as our Ombudsman until we return from Deployment. At that time we will be looking to turn the reigns over to another motivated spouse. Since I will have turned over Command to LCDR Holguin by then, the task of vetting potential candidates falls to him. Expect a call for a new Ombudsman to be sent soon. Feel free to contact Tanya if you are interested in the job in the future. Jenn Johnson will also continue to assist from San Antonio and is recovering nicely after her surgery.

The Family Readiness Group continues to do a superior job back home in San Diego. For all the spouses that have joined us since just prior to RIMPAC, I invite you to contact Heather Keylich if you are interested in joining. Kristen and Stephanie were forced to step down recently due to increased workload at home, but their support and hard work has been much appreciated. Heather has been trying hard to come up with great ideas for fundraisers for the FRG but she is always looking for new ideas in case anyone has a good one. In the past most of our fundraisers have focused on raising money internal to the crew itself but we are going to try and move in some new directions over the coming months. If you have ideas on how fundraisers could be focused more on the community as a whole, the FRG and myself are open to the idea.



"FROM COURAGE, VICTORY"

During November we were finally able to get underway again for some much needed training. The underway was a night time evolution, the first I have attempted here in Bahrain and while it may have been our first we performed as seasoned veterans. In fact, I have a hard time remembering a DAYLIGHT transit that was that easy. The underway itself was in support of a Fifth Fleet Exercise and was a great opportunity to flex all of our Combat Systems. We spent 12 days at sea in mostly Port and Starboard watch sections working with our British counterparts in the full spectrum of Mine Warfare capabilities that ARDENT offers. In addition to our normal Mine Hunting and Neutralization we also conducted 3 rafting evolutions with a British Amphib to take on stores and fuel. Rafting is an interesting evolution in which we moor up out-board of another ship at sea. It's a shiphandling intensive evolution and LT Perciballi and LTJG Pike did an exceptional job getting us alongside safely. During one of our raft's we brought onboard several VIP's for a tour.

RDML Klein, the new Commander of Expeditionary Strike Group Five and our Mine Warfare Commander here in C5F, and RDML Sawyer, Deputy Commander of Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command, along with Commodore O'Regan and all their associated staff came onboard as part of a special tour for some Washington budgeters who wanted a closer look at our MIW Systems. PMS 495, Mr. Fuller and Mrs. Carson-Jilly, were the true guests of the day. Their jobs are to provide the budgeting support we need for systems such as our Sonar, the AN/SQQ-32, and our Mine Neutralization Vehicle, AN/SLQ-48, and we did our best to show them some of the headaches we have with those systems. At the end of the tour they departed the ship with a much better understanding of how the systems that they maintain financially are implemented day-in and day-out here in the Arabian Gulf.

After the VIP tour was over we continued through the last few days of the Exercise before mooring back up and



preparing for another high profile Flag Officer visit later that week. Before that visit, though, there were several announcements that the crew had been looking forward to. Advancement results came out and the following deserving sailors were promoted: EN3 Rodriguez, EN2 Way, EN3 Quigley, IT1 Cantrall, QM2 Davis, CS3 Hope, EN3 Cox, IT2 Cuenca, and QM3 West. Following our frocking ceremony I announced the Sailors of the Year for CREW FEARLESS. Congratulations to EN3 Quigley, Blue Jacket of the Year, EN2 Way, Junior Sailor of the Year, and ET1 Castellano, Senior Sailor of the Year. All three of these Sailors are being recognized for the outstanding work ethic, desire to succeed, and superior performance they have shown over the last 12 months. Congratulations to them and their families!

Shortly before Thanksgiving CREW FEARLESS was the proud host of Admiral Harvey, Commander Fleet Forces Command, and the Senior SWO in the Navy. He is responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the entire Surface Fleet and was very interested in how to improve Mine Warfare. He, along with all the other Minesweeper CO's and PC CO's in Bahrain, joined me on the mess decks for an open and candid discussion about the issues that we are facing every day. When it was all said and done, not surprisingly, everyone wanted to give the CS's and Food Service Attendant's a round of applause for a terrific meal. It was a very successful visit, mostly due to the outstanding preparation by the Galley.

Following the terrific meal that the CS's put together for ADM Harvey was an even better Thanksgiving Meal that the entire crew enjoyed on November 25th. We gave the guys a shortened afternoon on Wednesday and followed that up with a half day on Thanksgiving Day as well. That morning CMC Brady fired up the grill on the fantail and cooked a

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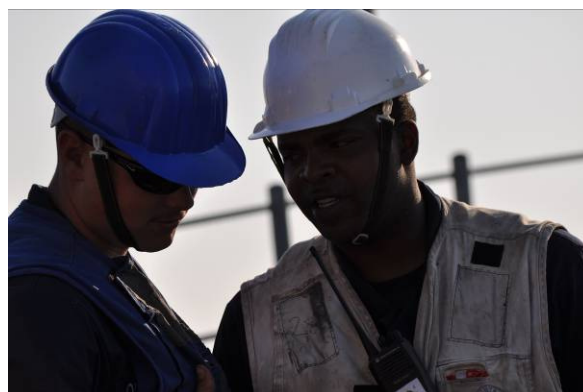
NOTES FROM THE CO

smoked Turkey to go with the normal Thanksgiving Turkey, Honey Ham, Mashed Potatoes, Stuffing, Gravy, Green Bean Casserole, Sweet Potatoes, and Broccoli and Cheese soup. We gathered the crew together at noon and enjoyed a short brief on Native and Alaskan Americans and followed it up by a great meal. When it was over many of were forced to take our "Turkey nap". The food was fantastic!

Again, thank you for all the support you are showing your Sailors. Their work ethic is often a direct reflection of the support they are receiving at home and while there will always be stressors (things that aren't quite going right) they have been remarkably resilient. With the Christmas Holidays upon you at home, I ask that you utilize every opportunity you can to talk with your spouse or exchange emails to help make the time pass. I can honestly say that this is the part of the Deployment that is the hardest but with open communication and things to help you stay busy, we'll all get through it and before you know it we'll be looking at 2011! Have a wonderful Holiday Season and Merry Christmas!

All the best,

Spencer



FAMILY READINESS GROUP

Our next fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, December 11th. We will be having a Yard Sale, so please gather items you would like to donate to the fundraiser. All monies raised will be used for upcoming events for our families.

Our next meeting will be at the Murphy Canyon Chapel on Tuesday, December 7th, at 6:00 pm. The meeting will serve as a collection day for the

Yard Sale, as well as our Half-way/Holiday celebration. We ask that everyone bring a side dish to share at the meeting and cookies (baked or store bought) that will be sent to the crew.

We hope everyone is able to join us at our upcoming events. Remember that your FRG is here to help support you and your family during this deployment - should you need

any information or additional support during deployment, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards,

Heather Keylich

OMBUDSMAN'S CORNER

Happy Holidays Fearless Families!!

Tanya and I Hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are looking forward to having a Merry Christmas. We want to urge all of you to give yourself a big pat on the back because December marks the halfway point and before we know it spring will be here and our families will be together again!

To help ease us through the next month and the biggest spending time of the year there are a few things for us to remember. Since not only are we Christmas shopping here at

home, but also our sailors may be shopping for us so remember to set a budget ahead of time for everyone. This will ensure that money isn't spent beyond its means and everyone knows what is expected. Sometimes it is difficult coming up with gift ideas for our sailors since they have a limited amount of space but we have found websites that do small personalized gifts that are very useful, take up minimal space, and have very affordable prices. If you are interested you can visit www.artscow.com and www.PersonalizationMall.com. These are also a great way to

let the kids be involved in doing something special for daddy.

And last but not least remember to have fun. It is not always easy going through the Holidays without our loved ones but it will make the season a whole lot more Jolly if we can remember to smile and be Thankful for everything we have.

Wishing everyone Happy Holidays and as always if you need anything please don't hesitate to let Tanya or I know.

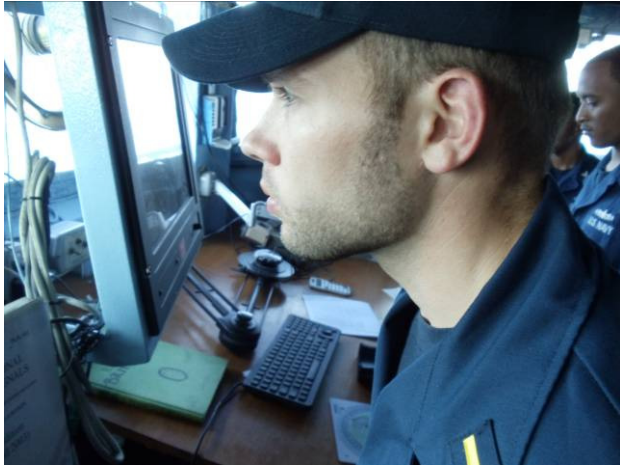
"FROM COURAGE, VICTORY"

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